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County's coronavirus cases more than double overnight

BY HANNAH SMOOT AND
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Mecklenburg County's number of COVID-19 cases more than doubled overnight as North Carolina and the county reported instances of community spread.

The county reported 32 positive COVID-19 cases as of

Thursday afternoon, compared with 14 reported Wednesday.

The state's first announced case of community spread of the coronavirus was confirmed in a patient in Wilson County, Gov. Roy Cooper said Thursday.

"This is expected, but still an unfortunate benchmark in this pandemic," Cooper said in a news conference.

Community spread happens when officials are not able to

pinpoint the origin of an individual's infection. Before, North Carolina's COVID-19 cases had been travel related, or people exposed to a confirmed case.

But Mecklenburg County Public Health Director Gibbie Harris had already told county commissioners Tuesday the Charlotte area has seen cases of community spread. She confirmed that to reporters Thursday, saying: "More than two."

Harris said she couldn't explain the contradiction between her Tuesday statement and the governor's Thursday announcement.

North Carolina had at least 119 reported cases of COVID-19 as of Thursday, the (Raleigh) News & Observer reported.

At least one of the North Carolina cases was a Charlotte-area doctor.

OrthoCarolina announced

Tuesday that a physician at the practice's Hip & Knee Center in Mercy Hospital in Charlotte tested positive for COVID-19.

The coronavirus' impact has started to spread across the region. Nearby Rowan County announced its first confirmed COVID-19 case Thursday. Rowan County health officials said they were notified late Wednesday.

SEE COVID-19 CASES , 2A

Burr issued stronger warnings to group

BY BRIAN MURPHY
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WASHINGTON

U.S. Sen. Richard Burr sold up to \$1.5 million in stocks, including hotel chains, in mid-February weeks before he warned a small private group that the coronavirus was "akin to the 1918 pandemic" and warned it to rethink European travel, according to leaked audio.

The stock sales were reflected on a financial disclosure form filed with the Senate on Feb. 27, the same day he spoke to members of the Tar Heel Circle, a high-dollar membership organization that is part of the North Carolina State Society of Washington, D.C. Pro Publica and the Center for Responsive Politics first reported the stock sales. NPR first reported the leaked audio.

Burr, a North Carolina Republican, is chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee. The committee was receiving daily updates on the coronavirus outbreak by late February, Reuters reported at the time.

"There's one thing I can tell you about this. It is much more aggressive in its transmission than anything that we

SEE BURR, 8A

CHANGES TO YOUR PAPER

In an effort to help us give you as much information as possible about the coronavirus pandemic, you may notice that we've moved some content to other sections. This is a temporary measure, and content will return to its usual place as soon as possible.

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I JUST FEEL LIKE, GOD, I'M TRYING. ... BUT I'M JUST SO TIRED.

Devonne Moise, a single mom battling lost income, shaky housing and the struggles of homeschooling kids with Wi-Fi that won't work



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Devonne Moise is a single mom with five children who is feeling the impact of the COVID-19 virus. Two of her children had jobs that have been temporarily suspended, decreasing the family's income. For now, Devonne and her family are struggling to make ends meet.

BY CRISTINA BOLLING
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There's a little cinnamon sprig tacked up by Devonne Moise's front door, a gift that a customer tucked into her hand one day as Moise worked the check-out line at Lidl.

"She said it brings prosperity and blessings," Moise said, "and I'm like, 'God, we need it.'"

That was a few months ago, when the single mom was under so much stress from trying to move her family out of a hotel and into a rental home that she'd cry in private so her five kids wouldn't hear her.

Moise was finally able to rent a house in West Charlotte in January. She left her job at Lidl and enrolled in a Goodwill training program to get computer skills. It was paying off. She had



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From left, D'erra, Daniel, Deon'tae and Devonne Moise are feeling the impact of the coronavirus.

a conditional offer for a customer service job with a healthcare company.

And then — coronavirus.

Across the Charlotte region and around the country, people like Moise, already struggling mightily to care for her family,

are confronting an ever-worsening situation because of the pandemic. Within the span of a week, schools closed, jobs dried up and money became a lot scarcer.

Within the last week, two of Moise's older kids' jobs shut down — jobs that she relied on to help pay the bills. A temporary position that Goodwill had offered Moise at one of its retail boutiques while she waited for the healthcare company to hire her was put on hold.

To make matters worse, her landlord said that to extend her short, three-month lease, her rent would rise by \$200 a month.

It could be 90 days before Moise's first day of work in her permanent healthcare job, and she doesn't know if that will even happen, given the circum-

SEE FAMILY, 8A

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